

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed November 18, 2002, has been received and its contents carefully noted.

In order to advance the prosecution, the specification has been editorially amended with section headings being changed to conform to U.S. Patent practice. Additionally, claims 1-4 have been amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention. Claims 5-7 have been canceled. Claims 1-4 are now pending in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102/103

The Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,473,500 to Risafi et al. ("Risafi"). Additionally, the Examiner rejected claims 2-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Risafi in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,076,076 to Gottfried.

It is respectfully submitted that the present claimed invention is patentable over the art of record for the following reasons. Accordingly, reconsideration of the Examiner's rejection is requested.

Amended claim 1 now recites an electronic payment system, which integrally implements payments for various goods and services

that are respectively required from a telephone network and a data communication network (especially, the Internet) by use of one pre-paid card.

Risafi refers to an electronic payment system, which includes a pre-paid card in the form of a smart card or a magnetic striped card.

As recited in the Abstract, the card of Risafi is used for purchase of various goods and services and is also used for other functions. The Examiner is referred to Figure 5a which shows PIN allocation and initial account setup, and Figures 9a to 9d which show purchase, use and reloading of the prepaid-smart card.

More specifically, Risafi defines a card number recorded in the card itself and a Personal Identification Number (PIN) the user can set up by himself. PIN in the present claimed invention functions as card number and the user can set up a password by himself. Therefore, to compare the terms, "card identification information" refers to card number in Risafi and PIN in the present claimed invention as the first identification information and user set-up information (i.e., PIN in Risafi and password in the present claimed invention) as the second identification information.

The difference between the present claimed invention and the Risafi are set forth in the following paragraphs.

Although, Risafi describes a pre-paid card in the form of a smart card or a magnetic card, the present claimed invention

does not need a region for electrically or magnetically recording data and the first identification information of the present claimed invention is printed in the form of a visually identifiable form (character or number). Actually, giving a card sold by a company utilizing the present invention off-line, for instance, the card has the first identification information covered by silver foil such as in an instant lottery upon purchase, and the user identifies the first identification information by scratching the silver foil using a copper coin, etc.

Further, the pre-paid card of the present claimed invention can be distributed in the form of a virtual card that transmits only a card number without a real card, with the result that the user can identify the first identification information using an Internet home page, an E-mail or a mobile phone, etc.

In order to use the pre-paid card of Risafi, a terminal having a card reader for reading the first identification information is necessary and is an essential constituent element. In the present claimed invention, the user directly inputs the first identification information using the keys in a terminal (e.g. PC or phone, etc.) without a card reader. In other words, Risafi essentially needs the dedicated terminal having the card reader for settlement even when using the Internet.

Risafi and the present claimed invention can be used to purchase various goods and services. In Risafi, the user can set up

the second identification information by himself or can use a reloading function. The card used for phone services and the card used for purchase of goods or services provided through the data communication network must be purchased separately and balance of the management for respective services should be conducted separately, which is a major problem. The present invention solves this problem amongst others.

The use of the present claimed invention enables the phone services and the purchase for goods or services provided through the data communication network through one pre-paid card, which can be conducted by single settlement of pre-paid card as will be described hereinafter.

Figure 5a in Risafi discloses PIN allocation and initial account setup and Figures 9a to 9d in Risafi disclose purchase, use and reloading of the pre-paid card.

Amended claim 1 of the present invention, however, refers to a payment system, which conducts settlements using the pre-paid card after initial account setup has already been carried out, that is, after the user has been in a state in which he or she could buy and use the pre-paid card. Accordingly, the methods for purchasing the pre-paid card, setting up the same, allocating PIN and reloading are not part of amended claim 1 as recited in the present invention. Meanwhile, the pre-paid card of the present claimed invention can be

used without a real card when memorizing the first and second identification information.

The user purchases a pre-paid card through payment of a certain amount of money at a place such as a shop or a retail store where an agent terminal has been installed, and then sets up the second identification information by himself. Then, the first identification information (card number) and the second identification information (PIN), payment for card, and information of transaction card are transferred to a prepaid debit card center (PDC) through the communication network (see lines 16 to 24, col. 16).

An item of information including the first identification information, second identification information, and payment for card, which is used in purchasing goods or services of electronic commercial transaction provided through the data communication network (especially, the Internet) is managed by a card file and an account file of PDC. Accordingly, payment for goods or services through the data communication network is directly carried out relative to a corresponding web site by PDC itself (see from line 66, col. 19 to line 18, col. 20).

When the user, however, purchases a card for telephone, the first identification information, second identification information, and card payment information are transferred to TELCO

through PDC, and TELCO directly manages balance management through a separate card file and account file (see lines 24+, col. 16).

That is, card balance for phone services is managed by TELCO, and to this end, TELCO receives necessary information from PDC. Accordingly, it is expected that, upon purchase of the card, the user should choose the card to be used for the telephone services provided through telephone network or electronic commercial services provided through data communication network. In case of the card to be used for telephone, PDC has only a function of transferring card related information to TELCO.

The pre-paid calling card system is connected to the telephone network and communicates with a settlement server connected to the data communication network. The balance management of the system is integrally managed by settling payments to be requested through the telephone network and the data communication network through striking of a balance from balance information about a corresponding card number of a master database. That is, balance management is conducted only by the pre-paid calling card system.

Further, the settlement server connected to the data communication network authenticates the pre-paid card by itself when requested a payment using the pre-paid card through the data communication network. The settlement server then inquires of balance particulars needed for payment to the pre-paid calling card system, and when the settlement is carried out, it transfers payment

information to the pre-paid calling card system so as to strike a balance from balance account of the corresponding card.

That is, authentication of the card used in the telephone network and the data communication network is independently carried out by the pre-paid calling card system and the settlement server, respectively, and payment (balance management) of the card used in the telephone network and the data communication network is carried out only by the pre-paid calling card system.

Another major difference therebetween is that the pre-paid card for telephone services and the pre-paid card for purchase of goods or service through the data communication network (especially, the Internet) are distinguished from each other or not.

Risafi uses the pre-paid card, but the user suffers from an inconvenience of having to distinguish between the card for telephone services and the card for purchase of goods and services through the data communication network. The present claimed invention, however, can use telephone services and settle payment for purchase of goods or services through the data communication network.

That is, in Risafi, account balance of the card used in the data communication network is independently managed by the card file and the account file of PDC, and account balance of the card used in telephone services is managed by the separate card file and account file of TELCO.

The present claimed invention, however, integrally manages account balance of each pre-paid card through a master database by use of the pre-paid calling card system (which corresponds to TELCO of Risafi). The settlement server of the present invention (which corresponds to PDC of Risafi) has only a function of authenticating the pre-paid card for settling payment for goods or services through the data communication network, and inquiry of balance account of the card or striking of a balance from the balance account of the card is actually carried out through the pre-paid calling card system.

According to the present invention, the user can use both telephone services and services of electronic commercial transaction through the data communication network by one card. Furthermore, even during the talking over the telephone, he or she is able to purchase goods or services through the Internet using the same card.

According to Risafi, however, the user cannot use all services of electronic commercial transaction through the Internet and telephone services using one card because settlements for telephone services and services on the Internet are independently carried out.

Conclusively, Risafi discloses a method independently applicable to services of electronic commercial transaction through the respective data communication network and telephone services, but the present invention discloses a system integrally applicable to

electronic commercial transaction services and telephone services, which is non-obvious to the one skilled in the art in view of Risafi.

As described previously, the invention as recited in amended claim 1 of the present invention is not obvious relative to Risafi.

Accordingly, although Gottfreid discloses pre-paid card system purchasable through on-line, the invention of amended claim 2 of the present invention is not obvious relative to a combination of the invention of Gottfreid and Risafi.

Further, although Risafi discloses an embodiment that a user purchases a pre-paid card and gives other people the card as a gift, the invention as recited in amended claim 3 is not obvious relative to Risafi.

A still further difference is that, although Risafi discloses a rechargeable function of the pre-paid card, this is different from the invention as recited in amended claim 4.

Conclusion

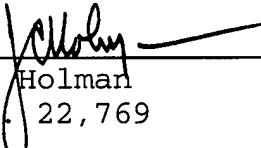
In view of the foregoing, it is believed that all the issues raised by the Examiner have been considered and appropriately addressed. Accordingly, this application is now in condition for allowance and action to that end is respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner believes that a conference would be of value in expediting the prosecution of this application, the Examiner

is invited to telephone the undersigned to arrange for such a conference.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

Respectfully submitted,
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Atty. Docket: 11340/P66550US0

Version with markings to show changes made.

In the Specification:

Please replace the heading at page 1, line 3, with the following headings:

Background of the Invention

[Technical] Field of the Invention

Please replace the heading at page 1, line 27, with the following rewritten heading:

[Disclosure] Summary of the Invention

Please replace the at page 3, line 17, with the following rewritten heading:

[Modes for Carrying Out] Description of the Invention

Please replace the paragraph at page 5, lines 1-14, with the following rewritten paragraph:

For example, when the user 202 accesses an Internet chargeable site or the Internet shopping mall 204, the user 202 enters a Personal Identification Number (PIN) (to be abbreviated as PIN# hereinafter) for payment. The accessed Internet shopping mall 204 requests authentication of the PIN# to the settlement server 150 through the payment G/W 160. The settlement server 150 exchanges the information with the [PCCP] PCCS 140 and transfers the authentication result of the PIN# to the Internet shopping mall 204 via the payment G/W 140. After the user 202 uses the service, billing for using the service is requested to the settlement server 150 through the payment G/W 160. Then, the settlement server 150 communicates with the [PCCP] PCCS 140 for settlement and then notifies the settlement result to the shopping mall 204 through the payment G/W 160. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the settlement server 150 and the [PCCP] PCCS 140 are separately processed for the sake of fast and convenient implement of the invention. However, the settlement server 150 and the [PCCP] PCCS 140 may run on a single computer, and even the payment G/W 140 may also be incorporated therein.

Please replace the paragraph at page 6, lines 22-25, with the following rewritten paragraph:

If the 'For user' option is selected, as shown in FIG. 10E, the user's password is registered and then the PIN# is activated by a [PCCP] PCCS server to complete the purchase procedure. After completion of the purchase procedure, the settlement server notified the purchase statement to the user.

Please replace the paragraphs at page 7, lines 1-20, with the following rewritten paragraphs:

Then, according to selection of the payment method, a screen for payment request is displayed. If there is a recharge request, payment is made through a payment gateway. After confirming that payment has been made, the information of the corresponding PIN# is updated by the [PCCP] PCCS server and the balance and state information of the corresponding PIN# are transferred to the settlement server. The settlement server registers transaction statement on its database, completes recharge and then notifies the recharge result to the user.

FIG. 6 is a flow diagram illustrating a procedure of buying goods using a multifunctional prepaid card according to the present invention.

Referring to FIG. 6 after the user access an Internet shopping mall for purchasing goods, the order sheet provided by the shopping mall is filled out. If a multifunctional prepaid card

according to the present invention is selected as a payment method, payment request is made to the payment gateway. The payment gateway receives a PIN# and password through a screen displayed on the shopping mall and requests authentication of the card to the settlement server. The settlement server requests the PIN# information and state and balance information to the [PCCP] PCCS server and then receives the information to determine whether payment is to be made. If it is determined that payment is possible, the PIN# information is updated, and the card information, that is, the state and balance information, is changed by the [PCCP] PCCS server. Then, the transaction statement is registered, and the payment result is notified to the user.

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 1 to 4 as follows:

1. (Amended) An electronic payments system wherein a real or virtual pre-paid card allocated a specific card number is issued to a user, and the user settles payment for goods or services using the allocated card number of the pre-paid card, the system comprising:

a [multifunctional prepaid] master database for storing the card [having a predetermined Personal Identification Number (PIN)]

number and balance information of the pre-paid card issued to the user and managing the same;

[shopping/service providing means for providing services and goods to a user of the multifunctional prepaid card and requesting the PIN of the multifunctional prepaid card for payment; and]

a pre-paid [card management system for managing state/balance information for PIN for the multifunctional prepaid card on a database, making a settlement by referring to the balance amount of the corresponding PIN if payment for a specific PIN is requested by the shopping/service providing means, and updating the settlement result on the database, wherein a single prepaid card can be comprehensively used in payment for use of various services and purchase of goods.]calling card system connected to the telephone network and communicating with a server, said server being connected to the data communication network, so that respective payments requested to be settled through the telephone network and the data communication network being balanced from balance information of the corresponding card number in the master database managed by the pre-paid calling card system, thereby integrally managing balance account of the pre-paid card; and

a settlement server being is connected to the data communication network and which, when there is a request for a settlement using the pre-paid card through the data communication network, authenticates the pre-paid card, settles the authenticated

pre-paid card through inquiry of the balance account to the pre-paid calling card system and transferring the settled information to said pre-paid calling card system, and

payments of various goods and services respectively requested through the telephone network and the data communication network being integrally carried out with one said pre-paid card.

2. (Amended) The electronic payments system according to claim 1, [wherein the prepaid card management system includes] further comprising a cyber card site [connected to the Internet to sell the multifunctional prepaid card over the Internet and to manage customers, and is configured to provide an cyber multifunctional prepaid card over the Internet in response to the user's purchase request of a card] for allocating a specific pre-paid card number and transferring the same to the user after settlement for purchase of the pre-paid card according to purchase request by the user through the Internet.

3. (Amended) The electronic payments system according to claim 2, wherein [the prepaid card management system is configured to transfer the corresponding cyber multifunctional prepaid card purchased by the user's request to a party designated by the user as a cyber gift coupon mailing service] the cyber card site inquiring whether the pre-paid card purchased by the user is used by the user

or is given to others as a gift from the user, and when chosen as a gift, transferring the card number of the purchased pre-paid card to an E-mail address of the other person being designated by the user.

4. (Amended) The electronic payments system according to claim 2, wherein the [prepaid card management system is configured to be reused by recharging the multifunctional card by a predetermined amount with the corresponding PIN of the user] cyber card site has a function for receiving the card number of the pre-purchased pre-paid card from the user in response to a recharge request from the user, wherein the user having access to the site through the Internet, and proceeding to settle payment for recharge relative to the received card number of the pre-paid card.